

## Contributions

### OUR DISTINCTIVE PLEA

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Every system among men must run the gauntlet of intellectual scrutiny. If it escapes a severe beating and bruising, it is because it fell lifeless from the first blow of criticism. It could not be otherwise, for this is our only means of distinguishing truth from error. If we take a statement of science we must know our author. If he is not worthy of our confidence we do not accept his statement. If a messenger claims to bring us a revelation from God, he must satisfy our demands for his right to speak for God, otherwise we do not, or should not respect his claims. Christianity, tho our living and dying hope, has become such by passing successfully the scrutinizing tests of logic.

What is our beginning place? Evidently we must have one. God's surveyors, however skilled, can not mark out the base-lines of highest development and culture without a "place of beginning." In searching the literature on this subject we find our fathers in their restoration movement acting wisely. God must have been in their work. Throwing aside worldly ambitions to become either leaders or heroes, they did not attempt to make a beginning place as scores of others have done but with hearts full of love to God and a burning desire to "crown him Lord of all" they shoveled away the debris of dead and dying creeds, and the traditions of elders, and found the *beginning place*, the chief corner stone. Ever since they took up the cry of restoring to the people the simple, plain, practical gospel of the Son of God, we have kept before them the motto, "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible." This Book is valuable, not because it is an attractive work, not because it contains truth, for other works have these characteristics, but because it is the only authentic account of the how and the why of the beginning place in the scheme of redemption.

We begin, therefore, with Christ. "Whom say ye that I am?" and "By what authority do ye these things?" are yet questions upon which our faith is based. If the mind can not reach satisfactory evidence as to who Christ is and where he gets his authority, it does not accept his claims. We accept this method of procedure because of such a vast amount of proof, along so many different lines; proof, not involving his divinity, nor questions of inspiration, but which satisfies one that he is the authority to which all appeals should be made. Among these evidences are the facts of prophecy with their undeniable fulfillment, the facts of history, the character of the founders of the new faith and the reasonableness of their doctrine, the utter impossibility of his being an impostor and yet the inventor of the system, and the admissions of the most scholarly infidels.

The confession of Peter, "Thou art the

Christ, the Son of the living God," with its attendant answer by Christ, "upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it," is most significant. When by these lines of evidence one is brought to accept this central truth, he is then ready to sit at the feet of the Master and learn from him about all subordinate questions. It is easy to see that there is no other rational "beginning place." There is no infallible church because they are composed of men who are fallible. Likewise the creeds of our great churches are fallible because of the men who made them. What would the Bible itself be without the authority of Jesus Christ? Jesus in quoting from certain books from the Pentateuch says, "Moses hath said;" yet critics will rise up, pretending to be wiser than Christ, and declare that Moses could not have written the very books from which Christ quotes. It is yet pertinent to ask "What think ye of Christ?"

Those who desire to be brethren only begin with Christ. They fear not the results. Wherever he leads they follow. "For neither is there any other name under the heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." Paul shouts down the ages not, I know what I have believed, but "I know whom I have believed." What one believes comes from human creeds. Whom one believes comes from God. A living Christ the creed is, therefore, the first item of our distinctive plea.

But it becomes my unpleasant duty to ask, What Christ? Fairbairn has written a book which he calls "The Place of Christ in Modern Theology." In it he says, "The most distinctive and determinative element in modern theology is what we may term a new feeling for Christ." That this element is very prevalent no one can deny. Mormonism is full of this sweet sentiment—this "new feeling for Christ." Infidelity is just boiling over with this "new feeling" about the Man of Galilee. The advocates of Scientism, and advocates of many other "fads" will speak of the enjoyments in this "new feeling for Christ" by the hour. "Christ as our Creed," therefore means but little to me unless I know what Christ is meant. Is it the Christ of "the new feeling," or the Christ of the New Testament? for there is a vast difference. The one settles questions by appealing to their new feelings; the other by appealing to the New Testament. The one tests Revelation from God by their experience; the other tests their experience by Revelation. The one is constantly receiving new revelations apart from the word of God; the other says in the language of Paul, I Tim. 4:16, "Continue in these things; for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and them that hear thee." He who contends for the book, the miraculous, finished revelation of God to his people, the book hundreds of years ahead of its own or any age can challenge the world for the presentation of a single spiritual truth whose die in which it was

cast can not be found in the word of God.

Every man who feels that he is a sinner feels the need of infallibility somewhere. He must believe that he comes in touch with it or there is, and can be no rescue from its guilt. Where can infallibility be found? Of course it is the voice of God. Where, oh where in this babel of confusion is that voice to be found? I read of a discussion one time where one of the speakers contended that the infallibility of the church of God was the Bible, the whole Bible and nothing but the Bible. This, it was affirmed, is the voice of God speaking to the Christian. When his opponent came to the platform to reply it is told that he picked up the Bible with a puzzled look and said: "I am not certain whether my ears have not deceived me. I understood my opponent to say that the Bible is the voice of God, and that this is the highest evidence any man can have of the forgiveness of sin and acceptance with God. Is this so?" His opponent answered, "Yes, sir." Then with a peculiar look, first at his opponent and then the Bible, went on: "There, now, you have it. Can it be possible that I am to have no higher evidence of pardon and acceptance with God—with Christ—than the bare word of God? To me, (laying his hand on his heart) the voice of God in my heart, is worth more than all the Bibles in the world." Here is the "new feeling," "new revelation" doctrine, so you can see its inevitable results. You can quote scripture to such people until dooms day and it counts for nothing, for to them, scripture must give way to the voice of God in their heart.

Jesus says "ye can not serve two masters." It is inevitable to me that no man can have two infallible guides at the same time. It is absolutely impossible. If they agree then you have two or more copies, but one guide. The Pope saw that there could be but one infallible guide at one and the same time, so the Bible had to go. Mrs. Eddy saw that, so she wrote a guide for her followers. Joe Smith understood it, so he gave us the Book of Mormon. The infallibility of these people is absolutely incompatible with the infallibility of the Bible, but no more so than any other claims outside the Bible. The moment one claims infallibility for some influence, some voice, some law making body aside from the Bible, that moment the infallibility of the Bible goes down. It is this old and worn truth that causes me to look on many of the new movements in religious circles with suspicion. For being cautious, and refusing to get in the procession of some of these new movements, I have the satisfaction of being called narrow, and a bigot. My only apology is that a long time ago a poor, humble Nazarine declared that He was "the way," and that that "way" was "narrow." He's my Savior. May He be yours, too.

Man's deep-felt need as a sinner for a touch with the infallible, the claims of the Bible thru Jesus Christ, God's dear Son to